

floor of the Senate that was, quite honestly, pretty remarkable. It was special, not because it was passionately delivered or because it was well-constructed, but because it so perfectly illuminated just how disconnected from reality the Senate's opponents of health care reform are.

Of the legislation pending in Congress, the minority leader said, "I am sure there are people in Kentucky who are for it. I have not met one."

Not one? Needless to say, this Kentuckian, for one, found the statement difficult to swallow, but that's beside the point.

The point is that my senior Senator made the claim despite poll after poll showing that the majority of the American people are for it, including not one but more than 1 million Kentuckians. The minority leader has read the same polls I have. I would venture to say that he has heard from many of the same thousands of Louisvillians from whom I've gotten calls, letters, e-mails, faxes, and visits. Everywhere I go in Louisville—from the VA hospital to community cookouts to the aisles of Kroger—I hear from people with valid perspectives on both sides of the issues, and we were elected to listen to all of them.

Yet my fellow Louisville resident proudly took the floor of the United States Senate this weekend and bragged that he was ignoring his constituents, half of them at least. He denied them as though a desire for reform is some sort of a preexisting condition that entitles him to abdicate his responsibilities to us.

Senator, you don't have to take my word for it, and I won't ask you to go searching through all of your old mail. If you're listening, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to a few of your constituents and mine—yes, your fellow Kentuckians. Then maybe the next time you exert your considerable power to stop something that you know is of vital importance to many of your constituents, you will take time to consider their views as well.

Elizabeth of Louisville wrote, "I am a single mother with two children. I am offered health insurance through my employer, but due to the high cost of this insurance, I do not always have enough money to go to the doctor when I need to. Health insurance companies have had at least two decades to get it together and fix the system they have in place, but they have chosen not to. Please do not place the citizens of this country at the mercy of some of the wealthiest companies in this country."

Bobby of Okolona wrote, "As a veteran and recently unemployed worker, I want to thank you for taking a stand on health care reform. I lost my job and insurance coverage in May of 2008. Do we need health care reform? You bet."

Mary of Louisville wrote, "I am asking you to support health care reform. We need a public option plan. My brother is a 59-year-old diabetic, and is

unable to get health care coverage. He is excluded from any plan."

Alvin of East End wrote, "Please do not let health care reform fail. I am a Registered Nurse. I've worked as a case manager at a local hospital. I have seen private insurance deny patients acute rehab after a stroke; whereas, with Medicare, we could have seen them."

Elizabeth of the East End wrote, "I am behind health care reform 100 percent. I am worried about our young adult children and how they can afford it. I have a child who had cancer. I've told her she needs to have a job that provides health insurance when she graduates. The insurance companies need to provide for those who need it most, not just the ones who are healthy."

□ 0915

Gregg of Louisville wrote, "Today I received my annual premium increase. My new premium has increased 32 percent. This has followed 18 to 25 percent increases in the last 3 years."

Andrea of Shively wrote, "Please vote for the health care bill. I am a heart attack survivor, and I am praying that I can stay with my company to keep my insurance. I will never be able to leave this company now that I have a preexisting condition."

Sandra of Prospect wrote, "I am totally behind President Obama's health care reform. I have insurance now, but was not allowed to have it for 4 years due to a preexisting condition. I lived in utter terror the entire time, fearing I would lose my house if I became sick."

Phyllis of the Highlands wrote, "I think we need health care for more people. For years, I struggled as a single parent to pay for health insurance for my five children, and it frequently cost me more than 30 percent of my income—in addition to copays."

Christian of Crescent Hill wrote, "I know what it is like not to have this basic human right, and I know how much better the quality of my life is now that I do not have to worry about it. I believe that it is shameful that we are the only developed country in the world without a public health system, and I would like to voice my support of the President's plan."

Finally, Matthew G., a 10-year-old boy from Louisville wrote, "My parents spend \$50,000 per year for my brother's autism, and I think it's a national crisis. It's just not fair, and this is a fair country, and everybody, no matter who they are, including my brother, Eric, should be treated equally."

Senator MCCONNELL, these are your constituents, yours and mine, and they are Americans. They are deserving of your attention and not your scorn. Please come with me to Louisville, and I will introduce you to more of the people who support health care reform for America.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to address their remarks to the Chair.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 17 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Ms. BALDWIN) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

Rev. Richard Hynes, Office of Evangelism, Archdiocese of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, offered the following prayer:

Lord God, on this date, Catholics honor Jesus' mother, her own conception, especially today at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, which is dedicated in her honor as our patroness of the United States of America.

God of peace and justice, 68 years ago today, from this Chamber, President Franklin Roosevelt asked Congress for the permission to respond to terror inflicted on our country in Pearl Harbor the previous day.

Sadly, Lord God, terror continues today. Individuals, groups of individuals, and even some nation-states imagine terror, prepare for terror, and conspire for terror. However, the necessity to protect innocent people, the right of communities to live in peace, the expectation that people can live with differences and in harmony remain deep desires for Americans and for many others of goodwill.

Guide our Nation with right judgment and courage. Encourage all who labor for an end to terror. We shall never cease seeking Your inspiration in our endeavors to imagine peace and to work for justice.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House her approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. SESTAK) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SESTAK led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

EXTENDED COBRA CONTINUATION PROTECTION ACT

(Mr. SESTAK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SESTAK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask the House to quickly pass the Extended COBRA Continuation Protection Act to ensure health coverage for millions of Americans who, through no fault of their own, have lost their jobs and now, because Wall Street gambled with their savings, cannot afford the COBRA premiums to keep their health care from their former employer.

So, in the economic stimulus bill we provided 65 percent of the cost of those premiums, but those benefits are now running out for those who were laid off first. I ask this House to quickly pass the bill to extend those COBRA premium subsidies for 6 months.

Take a woman in my district. She pays \$535 for her 35 percent share of the premiums. It will go over \$1,500 very soon if we do not act. And she has a preexisting condition and must keep on her health care plan.

Hundreds have contacted my office regarding this, and I ask this House to quickly help. As we come out of this savage recession, it's not just economic security, but it's health security we must address.

CO₂ IS NOW A POLLUTANT

(Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DANIEL E. LUNGREN of California. Madam Speaker, yesterday was a historic day. It will be a day which lives in economic infamy. The EPA administrator yesterday unsheathed the dagger at the heart of our economy when she announced an endangerment finding. Yes, CO₂ is now a pollutant. That means everyone in this Chamber, anyone who out there might be hearing us, you are now polluters. With every breath you take you emit CO₂.

This was never, ever, conceived by Congress when it passed the Clean Air Act. We now have a situation in which administrators are going to effectively control the entire economy and the way in which we live and the way in which we breathe. This is not the idea of freedom. This is, in fact, not an endangerment finding about clean air. This is an endangerment finding about our freedom.

Our freedom took a vicious blow yesterday, and we, as representatives of our people, must act.

ARE WE FIGHTING OR FUNDING THE TALIBAN?

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KUCINICH. Madam Speaker, U.S. contractors are paying U.S. tax dollars to the Taliban in order to protect the delivery of U.S. shipments of U.S. goods to U.S. soldiers so that our soldiers can fight against the Taliban.

In an investigative expose, *The Nation* magazine reveals "how U.S. funds the Taliban," and "with Pentagon cash, contractors bribe insurgents not to attack supply lines for U.S. troops." Another quote from the investigation: "The real secret to trucking in Afghanistan is ensuring security on the perilous roads controlled by warlords, tribal militias, insurgents, and Taliban commanders." The American executive I spoke to was fairly specific about it: "The Army is basically paying the Taliban not to shoot at them," and then the Taliban uses that money to shoot at our troops. What a racket.

Are we in Afghanistan to fight or to fund the Taliban or both?

NETWORKS IGNORE CLIMATEGATE SCANDAL

(Mr. SMITH of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Madam Speaker, ABC, CBS, and NBC are the winners of this week's Media Fairness Caucus' highly uncoveted "Lap Dog Award" for the most glaring example of media bias. The networks took 2 weeks to devote any coverage to the Climategate scandal on their evening news programs.

We now know that prominent scientists were so determined to advance the idea of human-made global warming that they worked together to hide contradictory temperature data. But for 2 weeks, none of the networks gave the scandal any coverage on their evening news programs, and when they finally did cover it, their reporting was largely slanted in favor of global warming alarmists.

The networks have shown a steady pattern of bias on climate change. During a 6-month period, four out of five network news reports failed to acknowledge any dissenting views about global warming, according to a Business and Media Institute study.

The networks should tell Americans the truth, rather than hide the facts.

FINANCIAL REGULATORY REFORM

(Mr. BACA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BACA. Madam Speaker, last fall our economy began a tailspin into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. For years, greed and irresponsibility was allowed to run wild.

Now, we find ourselves beginning to climb out of this hole.

This week, we will consider a comprehensive financial package that is loud and clear: No more, and I state, no more, no more will we allow financial institutions to engage in abusive behavior with other people's money. No more will we allow corporate executives to receive cash bonuses for failed investments. No more will we let consumer protection take a back seat to the bottom line of Bank of America or Citibank. The age of taxpayer funded bailouts is over.

Last fall, Americans lost faith in this country's ability to regulate corporate greed. This week, we have a chance to deliver reform Americans demand. We cannot let them down.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

SERVICE ACADEMY APPLICATIONS

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Madam Speaker, all too often we come to this floor to talk about problems in the country. Today, however, I want to mention some good news about the future of America and the next generation of patriotic men and women.

In my district this year, applications to the military service academies increased by 30 percent. Today's youth, more than ever, are looking to serve this country. And our academies are among the finest universities in the world.

While it may seem counterintuitive that a nation at war would see increased interest in military service, I think that we have remarkable young people who value the sacrifices made by previous generations. They know the value of freedom and liberty and are willing to defend these precious gifts. They're willing to serve a cause greater than themselves.

We just celebrated Thanksgiving, and I believe we need to be thankful for men and women who are eager to wear the uniform and become leaders in our military services.

WE'RE NOT DOING ENOUGH

(Mr. TEAGUE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. TEAGUE. Madam Speaker, Congressional Quarterly recently reported that more American military personnel have taken their own lives in 2009 than have been killed in either the Afghanistan or Iraq wars this year, with 334 members of the military service committing suicide. This staggering number means one thing. We're not doing enough.

We're not doing enough to provide adequate mental health care for our returning servicemembers. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2009 was